THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR) : (a) to (c) After considering all problems relating to the dependency of Formations and Units in and around Calcutta, as a part of an overall plan to streamline and modernise Ordnance Cover to all Units, an Expert Committee has recommended to the Army Headquarters the shifting of the Ordnance Depot, Calcutta to Panagarh. No Proposal has so far been received in the Ministry of Defence from the Army Headquarters, in this regard.

Raising fund through Real Estate

1005. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any plan has been received from Sub-Area Commander (Calcutta) for raising fund through real estate business involving 294 acres of land in Calcutta Maidan owned by the Defence Department;

(b) whether 81 clubs and offices utilise this stretch of land under leasehold title; and

(c) whether the Ministry of Defence has been asked to mobilise funds through sale of vacant prime land ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR) : (a) to (c) Pockets of Defence land at Calcutta Maidan have been leased to 67 clubs/organisations which are mostly engaged in sports activities. Some portions of land have also been leased/transferred to the State Government while a few have been encroached upon.

As of now, there is no plan to mobilise funds through sale of vacant prime Defence land in Calcutta city.

Crashing of 30 MIG-21 Planes

1006. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be plased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to news item that appeared in the Indian Express dated the 25th July, 1992 that as many as 30 MIG-21 planes crashed during the last three years killing 14 pilots which was a colossal loss to the nation in terms of public money and trained personnel;

(b) whether any enquiry was instituted in this regard;

(c) if so, what were the findings of the enquiry; and

(d) what precautions have been taken to ensure that such tragic accident could be avoided in future in the interest of the nation ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The accidents were caused due to human error (air crew), technical defects, bird strike, natural and operational risks, etc.

(d) Efforts to minimise accidents are an ongoing process. Every accident is investigated by a Court of Inquiry comprising concerned specialists. Based on the recommendations of the Court of Inquiry, follow up action is taken to prevent recurrence of similar accidents. Whenever any adverse trend or weak area is observed, special joint studies are carried out with the help of specialists from the manufacturers and the users to closely examine the problem and take suitable remedial measures. Action on the various recommendations of a High Level Committee which examined all aspects of Flight Safety, accepted by Government, has been completed.

Defence ties with Israel

1007. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN :
SHRI RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to refer to reply to Unstarred Question 1023 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 20th July, 1992 and state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India is going to enter into defence ties with Israel;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what are the areas in which such ties are proposed to be signed ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR) : (a) to (c) No proposal is presently under consideration for concluding any general Defence Cooperation agreement with Israel. Only exploratory discussions have so far taken place regarding Defence equipments and technologies; no concrete results have materialised as yet.

Pak Firing across Jammu and Kashmir Border

1008. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA:
SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of times on which unprovked firing was resorted to by Pakistan on Jammu and Kashmir border from August to date;

(b) the number of casualties suffered as a result thereof;

(c) what action has been taken to check these firings;

(d) whether it is a fact that a large number of families had to be shifted from border areas due to these firings, if so the details in this regard in respect of Poonch, and Rajouri and the other sectors; and

(e) what are the details of plan drawn to provide relief and rehabilitation to these affected families ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR) : (a) and (b) There have been incidents of exchange of fire between Indian and Pakistani forces across the Line of Control resulting in some casualties on both the sides. It would not be desirable to disclose further details.

(c) With a view to reducing tension and preventing escalation, the Directors General of Military Operations of India and Pakistan maintain weekly telephonic contact with each other. Meetings of Sector Commanders also take place, as and when required, with a view to resolving issues with potential of causing tension.

(d) and (e) The information is being obtained and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Shortage of Manpower in Defence Services

1009. SHRI MOHAMMED AMIN :
SHRI SUKOMAL SEN :
SHRI RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI :
SHRI KAMAL MORARKA :
SHRI J. S. RAJU :
SHRI V. GOPALSAMY :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is shortage of manpower in defence services;

(b) if so, the reasons for such situation; and

(c) what steps are being contemplated to improve the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR) : (a) to (c) There are certain shortages in certain ranks in the Defence Services. A variety of factors are responsible for the deficiencies, including, *inter alia*, the availability of attractive alternative opportunities to the eligible youth. Remedial measures are an ongoing process and include special entry schemes, enhanced induction of permanent commissioned officers, short service commission, induction of women, etc.

Reservation for Backward classes in Army Recruitment

1010. SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATARAMAN : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any reservation for backward and most backward classes in the selection of men in army in its various departments including recruitment for field work in army; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR) : (a) and (b) Selection to all ranks in the Armed forces is open to all eligible Indian nationals, irrespective of class, caste, creed, community and religion. As such, there is no reservation quota in favour of any caste, tribe, class or community.